



Community Prevention and Addiction Services

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Testimony to the Public Health Committee
In Support of House Bill #6088: *An Act Concerning a Dedicated Alcohol Tax to Fund Substance Abuse Treatment Programs*
By Leanne M. Dillian, President/CEO
February 21, 2007

Good Afternoon honored members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Leanne Dillian and I am the President/CEO of Community Prevention and Addiction Services, Inc. and a member of the Executive Committee at the CT Association of Substance Abuse Agencies. Community Prevention and Addiction Services, Inc. provides services to the residents of Eastern Connecticut and Manchester and contiguous towns. Our services include outreach, case management, outpatient, detoxification, ambulatory detox, methadone maintenance, intensive residential services, intermediate residential services and intermediate residential services for substance abusing pregnant and postpartum women and their children.

I am submitting testimony today to express my support for Bill Number 6088, An Act Concerning a Dedicated Alcohol Tax to Fund Substance Abuse Treatment Programs, for three major reasons; chronic under-funding of substance abuse treatment programs, increased public health and public acceptance:

- 1) CT's addiction treatment system is under-funded, struggling to make ends meet to serve thousands of individuals annually. Community Prevention and Addiction Services served 4,149 clients last year. However, without across the board rate increases in nearly 9 years and SAGA rates that meet approximately 70% of costs for providers state-wide, the struggle to treat the devastating disease of addiction becomes more and more difficult each year. And, as you know, the Governor's budget offers no relief for rates or program costs at all.
- 2) Increased alcohol taxes, especially beer, have been shown to reduce underage drinking. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2004) ranks Connecticut 5th for the highest rates of alcohol use and illicit drug dependence in all age categories and, with 48% of 18-25 year olds reporting binge drinking in the previous month. Respected researchers and advocates at JoinTogether.org report that "The five states with the highest beer taxes have significantly lower rates of teen binge drinking than the states with the lowest taxes".
- 3) CT has not raised its beer tax since 1989, which is ranked 29th among the 50 states at 19 cents per gallon. The national average is 26 cents per gallon. Polling by the American Medical Association in 2004 clearly demonstrated that voters of both parties, including drinkers, support increased alcohol taxes that support treatment programs and off-set budget shortfalls.

Please support Bill #6088 and the addiction treatment providers of this state so that we can continue to work for the public good, providing treatment in lieu of more costly incarceration and extensive medical care. Thank you for your attention.